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A

REPRESENTATION

MADE

By the Lower House of Convocation

TO

The Arch-Bishops and Bishops:

(*The greater part of whom, are of K.* W-----'s *Creating*; *and Voted against the Bill of* Occasional Conformity.

SHEWING

The Diligence of the *Lower*, and Remissness of the *Upper-House*, in suppressing Books published against the Truth of Christianity.

AS ALSO

Their Difficulty in Administring the *HOLY SACRAMENT*, to those who demand it, as a Qualification for Publick Offices.

LONDON,

Printed in the Year 1705.

A

REPRESENTATION

MADE

BY THE

Right Honourable and Honourable

THE

Lords Archbishops and Bishops;

Of Occasional Conformity.

In a Letter to a Member of the Lords House of Commons.

AS ALSO

The Humble Address of the Lords to Her Majesty upon the Occasion.

A

REPRESENTATION

Made by the

Lower Houſe of Convocation,

TO THE

Arch-Biſhops and Biſhops,

December, 1704.

May it pleaſe your Grace and your Lordſhips,

IT is not without exceeding Grief, that we have found a general Complaint amongſt all, who wiſh well to our Church, eſpecially amongſt the Clergy, whom we repreſent; That notwithſtanding the Convocations of this Province have, after a long Diſcontinuance, been for ſome Years laſt paſt duly and regularly held; yet the publick hath not hitherto reap'd thereby any of thoſe Benefits, which might reaſonably be expected from them. We are deeply ſenſible that a Complaint of this kind doth not only caſt a Reproach on your Lordſhips, ond upon us, but doth alſo tend to the Diſparagement of the Conſtitution of this Church, and gives Occaſion to ſome ſlanderous and evil-diſpoſed Perſons to utter raſh and unſound Speeches, againſt the Neceſſity and Uſefulneſs of Eccleſiaſtical Synods. We therefore think it our indiſpenſible Duty, to do whatſoever in us lies, for the time to come, in Order to ſilence that Complaint, which we have conſtantly and earneſtly endeavour'd, for the time paſt, to prevent. For we beg Leave to obſerve to your Lordſhips, that whatever Blame the Convocation may ly under, for having made

ſo little Progreſs in Buſineſs relating to the publick Good of the Church; yet the Clergy of the *Lower Houſe* have all along made ſuch Advances therein, that they have been rather accus'd for being too forward, than cenſur'd for their Remiſſneſs. A greater Progreſs had been, no Doubt, made in the Diſpatch of Publick Buſineſs, had it not been interrupted by the unhappy Diſpute between the Two Houſes, concerning the Manner of Synodical Proceedings; and we ſhould think our ſelves juſtly chargeable with all the evil Conſequences of thoſe Diſputes, if our Conſciences did not bear a Teſtimony, that we neither rais'd them, nor, after their Riſe, omitted any means, which we could poſſibly contrive for bringing them to a regular Determination.

We had Hopes, that all the Differences between the Two Houſes about Forms, would more eaſily and ſooner be compos'd, if both entred upon Buſineſs of that Weight and Moment, as it might juſtly be conceived all the Fathers and Sons of this Church would unanimonſly promote: And the *Lower Houſe* would with Gladneſs have receiv'd any Directions, which your Lordſhips, in your great Wiſdoms, ſhould have been pleas'd to have given them for the Good of this Church. But when nothing of this kind was offer'd to them by your Lordſhips, your Clergy thought they might, without being guilty of great Preſumption, make their humble Applications about ſuch Matters to your Lordſhips.

They did accordingly ſome Years ſince, lay before your Lordſhips, ſeveral Poſitions (extracted out of a Book entituled, *Chriſtianity not myſterious*, and bearing the Name of *J. Toland*) which they judged to be pernicious, dangerous, ſcandalous, and deſtructive of the Chriſtian Faith, and did pray your Lordſhips Concurrence with their Reſolutions, together with your Directions and Advice, what

what effectual Courſe might be taken to ſuppreſs pernicious Books, written againſt the Truth of the Chriſtian Religion, and to prevent the Publication of them for the future. Your Lordships were not hereupon pleas'd to declare to the *Lower Houſe*, your Opinions concerning the Poſitions preſented to you, or concerning the Book in which it was contain'd, (which was at the ſame time laid before your Lordships) or to give your Clergy your Advice and Directions, which they humbly pray'd.

After this, ſeveral other Books were publish'd of the like pernicious Nature and Tendency; and it manifeſtly appear'd, that the Adverſaries of our Holy Faith were ſo far from being deter'd, that they proceeded to vent their impious Opinions with great Aſſurance and Licenciouſneſs.

The *Lower Houſe* did in this Convocation, in all humble Manner remind your Lordſhips of this daring Liberty of the Preſs; through which, ſeveral ungodly Books were ſtill publickly diſperſed; and did then more particularly point at a ſcandalous Book, in which the Immortality of the Souls of Men was openly denyed: But ſufficient Notice was not taken of ſuch Books; by reaſon whereof, the Honourable Houſe of Commons brought this Matter under their Cogniſance, and paſs'd a Cenſure upon one of the Books, by your Clergy complain'd of, to the great Honour of that Body, and not without Reproach upon the Convocation then ſitting.

The Clergy of the *Lower Houſe* found no Succeſs from theſe their reiterated Addreſſes to your Lordſhips, who had been pleaſed to acquaint them, "That upon conſulting Council, learned in the Law, concerning Heretical, impious, and immoral Books, you could not find how, without a Royal Licence, you had ſufficient Authority to cenſure judicially, any ſuch Books"

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Wherefore, though they were fully ſatisfied, that your Lordſhips might have comply'd with their Deſires, without a Royal Licence, or might have procur'd a Licence if requiſite; yet they were unwilling to preſs your Lordſhips any further upon that Head; and went on to lay before your Lordſhips, other Matters, in which there could be no doubt but your Lordſhips might interpoſe your Epiſcopal Authority, without the Intervention of a Royal Licence. They did therefore preſent to your Lordſhips, ſeveral Articles of Grievances, in hopes, that ſome of them at leaſt would appear to your Lordſhips, as all of them did to them, worthy of preſent Deliberation and Redreſs. Your Grace was pleas'd to acquaint them; "That an Order had been given for making out "Copies of that Repreſentation, both for the preſent "and abſent Biſhops, who your Grace truſted, would "make the proper Uſe of them at all times, and eſpeci- "ally at their Viſitation; and would alſo call upon their "reſpective Arch-Deacons, to do all that was in their "Power, in their's, to give them farther Information, "and to redreſs Abuſes, as far as may be.

Your Clergy ſhall very much rejoice to be informed by your Lordſhips, that ſuch Uſe has been made as your Grace truſted would be, of that Repreſentation, and ſhall be very thankful to your Lordſhips for what they ſhall learn hath been done by your Lordſhips for the Redreſs of ſuch Abuſes; and if any thing remain to be further done therein Synodically, the *Lower Houſe* will gladly join with your Lordships in ſo good and neceſſary a Work; as having no other End in their View, but a Reformation of ſuch things as are amiſs, and utterly deteſting from their Hearts any ſuch Siniſter Intention, as they have been unjuſtly charg'd with, of bringing an *Odium* upon your Lordships by the Re-

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preſentation they made. For which falſe and uncharitable Surmiſe, no ground was given, either by the Matter or Manner of that Repreſentation.

Your Clergy do with all Duty, ſubmit the Conſideration of theſe things to your Lordſhips Godly Wiſdom, and do moſt earneſtly beſeech your Lordſhips, That you would exert your Vigilance and Zeal for reſcuing Convocations from that Contempt, into which they are in Danger of falling, if they ſhould be wholly uſeleſs to the Church and State; and, that in order thereunto, your Lordſhips would condeſcend to impart to your Clergy the Reſults af your Lordſhips wiſe Conſultations about what may Legally and Properly be done by this Synod, for the Honour of Religion, and for the Maintenance of the Doctrine, Worſhip, and Diſcipline of the Church; and would alſo candidly receive from your Clergy ſuch Dutiful Applications, as they ſhall, from time to time, make to your Lordſhips for theſe good purpoſes.

At preſent we think our ſelves oblig'd to repeat to your Lordſhips a Motion formerly made by this Houſe, concerning a Bill for the more Eaſie and Speedy Recovery of Church-Rates. We judge it highly requiſite, that ſuch a Bill ſhould be drawn and offered in Parliament, in order to remove the Objections rais'd againſt the preſent Method of Levying Church-Rates in ſome Caſes; and to ſatisfie the juſt Expectations of thoſe of a former Bill to this purpoſe, of dangerous Conſequence to the Liberties of the Church, immemorially enjoy'd, and ſolemnly declared in the Statute of *Circumſpectè agatis*. We therefore pray your Lordſhips, that ſome of our Houſe may be permitted to join with your Lordships in preparing the Heads of ſuch a Bill, as may redreſs the Grievance complain'd of

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without the impairing the Authority of the Church in that behalf. And we think such a Bill, at this time, the more necessary, because of the great Damage done to several Churches in this Province by the late dreadful Storm.

We do also beg leave, to take notice of the many evil and pernicious Books, which are Publish'd and Dispers'd, to the Dishonour of God, and the great Scandal of this Church. And we do with all Humility and Earnestness repeat that Request, which we formerly made to your Lordships, That you would be pleas'd to take this matter in your most Serious and Paternal Consideration, and use your Interest in the Parliament for the passing a Bill against the Licentiousness of the Press.

We do further humbly Represent to your Lordships, that there are, and encrease daily many Difficulties upon the Parochial Clergy, about Administring the Holy Sacrament to all Persons indifferently, who demand it, in order to qualifie themselves for Offices (as is required by several good and wholsome Laws, very necessary for the perpetual Establishment and Security of our Church) because we see not, how we can in several Cases act conformably to the Rubrick and Canons of the Church in repelling such Persons, as are unworthy, and particularly notorious Shismaticks, without exposing our selves to Vexatious and Expensive Suits at Law. We therefore most humbly beseech your Lordships, in Tenderness to the Clergy, over whom God hath made you Overseers, to imploy your Interest for the freeing us from these Difficulties; and in the mean time to give us your Paternal Directions, how you think it fit, we should behave our selves under such Exigencies.

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